

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this case. Claims 1-2 (in part), 3, and 4-17 (in part) have been examined, and claim 18 is withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is addressed below.

By the present amendment, claims 9-17 have been canceled to expedite prosecution of the present application. For the record, Applicants do not agree with the Office on the present rejections, and plan to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a continuation application.

Information Disclosure Statement

As requested by the Examiner, Applicants enclose a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement, Forms PTO-1449, and cited references that were hand-delivered to the U.S. Patent Office on February 13, 2003 and were inadvertently misplaced.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for indefiniteness.

The Office finds that claim 1, from which claims 2-7 depend, is indefinite because

"the proviso is/are not clear." As recommended by the Office, Applicants have added a numbering system in the proviso to clarify the claim language. In view of this amendment, Applicants respectfully request that this aspect of the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 9, 10, 14, and 17 further stand rejected for failure to recite actual steps.

Claims 9-17 are now cancelled, thus rendering this rejection moot.

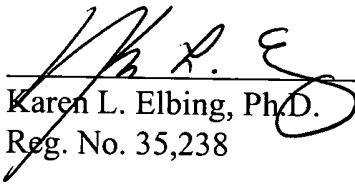
CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition of allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Although no charges are believed to be due, if there are any charges or any credits, please apply them to Deposit Account No. 03-2095.

Respectfully submitted,

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